

# EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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### REMARKS BY

**U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA**  
**ROTARY CLUB OF GULSHAN LAKE CITY, DHAKA**  
**3RD CLEFT LIP & PALATE SURGERY MISSION**  
**ALLIANCE FOR SMILES, ROTARY CLUBS FROM USA AND DHAKA SHISHU**  
**(CHILDREN) HOSPITAL**  
**BRAC CENTRE INN, BRAC CENTRE, 75 MOHAKHALI, DHAKA.**  
**13TH OF MARCH, 2013**

Mr. M.M. Niaz Uddin, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Rtn. Ishtiaque A Zaman, PhD, Rotary District Governor

Prof. (Dr.) Mahmudur Rahman, FRCP, Chairman, Management Board, Dhaka Shishu  
(Children) Hospital

Mr. Arshad Jamal (Depu), Chairman, Tusuka Group

Rtn. Mohammad Kamal Uddin, Gulshan Lake City Rotary Club president

Rtn. M. Zainul Abedin, Chair of the Projects Committee

Rtn. Niloofar Tasnim, Director, Service Projects

Distinguished guests, friends, colleagues and most especially good, good Rotarians from  
America and Netherlands and beyond...

Asalaam 'alaikum, good evening ...

... and an especially warm welcome to the volunteers who have come from America and Europe to  
Bangladesh. I am so pleased to see you again ... last time we met at Jon's house you were still  
recovering from jet lag and for those of you new to Bangladesh, you might have been wondering just  
exactly where you were and what exactly you were doing here ...

Now as I look out upon you, I see your faces wreathed with smiles ... smiles of success ...  
smiles of joy ... smiles of satisfaction that you were able to play some part in helping others ...  
strangers, total strangers, strangers from a different and far-away land ... to have a smile ... to have a  
smile ... to have a smile ... can you imagine life without a smile?

For many that is not a rhetorical question. It is the reality of life for those with a cleft palate and  
lip.

A smile is a wondrous thing ... a great gift of life ... most of us take a smile for granted ... we  
never think about it ... we seldom consider that a smile, a simple, genuine smile is our most powerful  
tool of communication ... a smile, a simple genuine smile equals the great sonnets of Shakespeare in  
conveying our emotions, our feelings, our hopes, our aspirations ... a smile, a simple genuine smile is

truly a wondrous thing, yet many of us take it for granted and never consider how blessed we are to have this great gift.

You, you who have traversed so far to come to Bangladesh; you Bangladeshis who are here not because you have to be, but because you want to be, because you want to help your fellow Bangladeshis, you, all of you, you know the power and beauty of a smile ... and that is why you are here ... you are here to work together ... each bringing special skills, talents, dedication to help repair cleft lips and palates, to help build new smiles. You must be so proud of the living legacy that you leave behind.

I am often asked about my work. My father, a hard working dairy farmer from Iowa, used to say to me, “Danny, can you tell me in plain English just what exactly you do in the Foreign Service?” And I would answer the question, but I think my answers never quite filled the bill, because invariably a day or two later he would ask me the same question.

I think Dad wanted to hear something magical ... something like what my son, an astrophysicist, says about his work, which explores the creation of new galaxies ... Dad would have been impressed with that. But my answer to Dad’s question has never changed from my first day on the job 32 years ago as a junior officer to today when I serve as America’s ambassador to wonderful Bangladesh. My answer is simply that I am a bridge builder ... a builder of bridges between countries, between governments, between cultures, between people. In fact, that is what all of us do at U.S. Mission Dhaka; we build bridges. Our USAID health team is building a beautiful, stainless steel bridge from their successful campaign to reduce maternal mortality, cut child under five mortality; our agriculture team is building a strong concrete bridge of food security and improved nutrition; our political and economic team is building a steel truss bridge of strengthened democracy and respect for human rights. As for me, my bridge is a bit of a cobbled up affair of 2X4’s, warped plywood, and 16 penny galvanized nails, but I’m proud of it as it represents my best efforts to build bridges between America and Bangladesh.

So, when you visit the U.S. Embassy here it is a cacophony of noise as everyone is busily building bridges.

But be assured, nobody at the Embassy can match the sixty bridges that you built ... you built huge, gleaming white, graceful suspension bridges like the Golden Gate Bridge or the Sydney Harbor Bridge ... beautiful bridges ... bridges of smiles ... and across these sixty bridges stream new hopes, new dreams, new aspirations by sixty grateful Bangladeshis for a better life, a life that these sixty people never thought could be theirs.

I hope you are proud of these bridges ... you leave a wondrous legacy ... you must be so proud.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*